

New Year's Resolutions – Setting Goals

The first day of a calendar year is one of the world's oldest holidays. The Babylonians are known to have celebrated the New Year approximately 4,000 years ago, and this ancient civilization is credited by some with originating an annual tradition still going strong: The New Year's resolution.

Top Eleven New Year Resolutions according to the Kansas City Public Library:

- Spend more time with the family.
- Get in shape.
- Lose weight.
- Eat better.
- Break a bad habit – quit smoking.
- Get out of debt – stick to a budget.
- Learn something new.
- Help others.
- Get organized.
- Get a new job.
- Reduce stress.

Did you know?

- 100 million Americans will make resolutions.
- 66% of Americans will make at least one resolution a year.
- 47% of those who want to lose weight wish to lose at least 25 pounds.
- 13% keep their resolutions until five minutes past midnight.
- 13% will promise to eat better.
- 7% will resolve to cut back on alcohol, caffeine, and tobacco.

January is the month to start a physical activity program, to start shedding those extra pounds, and to make healthier choices.

Research shows that the most success at losing weight comes when people:

- Increase their activity level.
- Reduce their total number of calories.
- Adopt behaviors that promote healthy eating.

One food-related goal will be to select one of the following nine (9) nutritional tips for the coming year:

- Eat breakfast.
- Eat fruit.
- Eat vegetables.
- Eat whole grains.
- Reduce sweets and salty snacks.

- Drink more water.
- Reduce colas and sweetened beverages.
- Drink milk/eat milk based foods.

One physical activity related goal should be set for the coming year. Examples include walking, walking a pet, chair exercises, join and participate with a sport's team, riding a bike, swimming or any other physical activity several times a week.

The third goal to set is for a behavior change. Examples of these changes can include watching less television, eat only at the table, keep a food journal, keep an activity journal, do not over eat at meals – no second helpings and chew each bite of food at least 12 times.

How to Keep Your Resolutions:

- Be committed!
- Vocalize your resolutions so you hear it clearly.
- Find a role model.
- Persist.
- Have coping strategies to deal with problems that will come up.
- Journal your progress. The more monitoring you do and feedback you get, the better you will do.
- Do not make your resolutions at the last minute – as the clock is striking midnight.
- The best motivator for keeping a resolution is support from friends and family.

People age 55 and over can receive healthy lifestyle information on living healthier in the New Year through SenioRx/Wellness. The program also provides free prescription medicine to people who qualify. Call 1-800-243-5463 for more information or to sign up for SenioRx/Wellness. This program is a partnership between the Alabama Department of Senior Services and the Alabama Department of Public Health.